

Letter from Secretary Kerry

Office To Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
Trafficking in Persons Report 2013

Dear Reader:

Throughout my career—as a prosecutor, a United States Senator, and now as Secretary of State—I have dedicated myself to ensuring victims of exploitation and abuse are treated with dignity and respect before the law, so that they may see their abusers brought to justice and begin the process of healing. Last year, I chaired the first-ever hearing on human trafficking in the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, where we heard about the challenges trafficking victims face in getting out of harm's way and getting their lives back on track. As Secretary of State, I am committed to making sure that survivors' voices continue to be heard, because their experiences and knowledge help shape our laws and policies as well as the way we implement them.

Ending modern slavery must remain a foreign policy priority. Fighting this crime wherever it exists is in our national interest. Human trafficking undermines the rule of law and creates instability. It tears apart families and communities. It damages the environment and corrupts the global supply chains and labor markets that keep the world's economies thriving.

We also have a moral obligation to meet this challenge head-on. Human trafficking is an assault on our most dearly held values of freedom and basic human dignity. American leadership means protecting those values at home and working to advance them around the world.

We will continue to do so through our diplomacy and development efforts. We will continue to do so by supporting those who are working to prevent trafficking, who come to the aid of victims, and who work to bring traffickers to justice. We will continue to do so by bringing together an array of stakeholders—from civil society and the faith community to the private sector and government leaders—to forge partnerships aimed at spurring innovation and improving collaboration.

And we will continue to do so through our *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Governments bear primary responsibility for responding to this crime, and this annual *Report* is the gold standard in assessing how well governments—including our own—are meeting that responsibility. This year, 188 countries and territories are included, and we have taken a hard look at one of the biggest problems we face in combating modern slavery: the challenge of accurate, effective victim identification. Only through vigorous victim identification can we ensure that trafficking survivors get the services they need, can participate in legal proceedings, and can have their voices heard.

This *Report* is not about pointing fingers. Rather, it provides a thorough account of a problem that affects all countries. It also lays out ways that every government can do better. In the year ahead, we will use this *Report* to help guide our engagement on this issue. We hope it will be a resource for anyone who shares the vision of a world free from slavery.

Sincerely,

John F. Kerry
Secretary of State